

executing, responsive to the device signal, a second program in a second memory, to determine a discount quantity by correlating second signals with third signals, wherein the step of executing a first program determines a total amount due by receiving a fourth signal from the step of executing a second program.

REMARKS

Claims 19-24, 26, 28-40, and 42-46 will be pending in this application after the Examiner enters the forgoing amendment.

The Examiner rejected claims 19 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,884,278 to Powell (Powell '278); and rejected claims 20-24, 26, 28, 30-34, 36-40, 42, and 44-46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Powell '278.

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are patentable over the art of record, and are otherwise in condition for allowance.

Powell '278 discloses a computer network for a retail store. Each cash register includes a special computer for coupon redemption compilation. The special computer interfaces to conventional cash register computer hardware without requiring a substantial change to cash register computer software. (Abstract).

Powell '278 also discloses:

FIG. 18A shows a processing performed by card interface computer 920. If the checkout clerk activates button 919 (Step 18001), card interface computer 920 gets electronic coupons from a customer card in interface slot 914 and sends the coupons to cash register computer 930 (Step 18002). If a bar-code having an initial digit of 5, indicating a coupon, is received via cable 916 from bar-code reader 910 (Step 18060), CPU 952 determines whether a household ID is present in the coupon bar-code symbol (Step 18065). . . . If the household ID is present, CPU 952 sends the coupon to the market research server.

(Powell '278 col. 11, lines 9-25).

Powell '278 also discloses:

In another alternative system, the card interface computer 920 could monitor the messages sent, over LAN cable 1510 by cash register computer 930, to detect the product request messages 3002 sent by cash register computer 930. Thus, card interface computer 920 could detect which products are purchased and only send coupons from list 8435 corresponding to purchased products, and only delete coupons from list 8435 corresponding to purchased products.

(Powell '278 col. 13, lines 43-50).

In contrast, each of claims 19-24, 26, and 28, as amended, recites a system for operating with a store. Each cash register station includes a card interface for reading third signals corresponding to product pricing from the card memory of one of the portable cards; a first processing unit, wherein the system also includes a plurality of second processing units, each second processing unit executing a second program in a second memory, to determine a discount quantity by correlating second signals from the electromagnetic detector, in a respective one of the cash register stations, with the third signals read by the card interface. (Base claim 19). No reasonable combination of the art of record suggests this particular combination, including the recited second processing unit and discount quantity.

Claims 29-34 are patentable as each recites a card interface for reading from the card memory of one of the portable of cards; a first processing unit, a signal path between a peripheral device and the first processing unit, a second processing unit, responsive to a signal on the signal path, that executes a second program in a second memory, to determine a discount quantity by correlating second signals with third signals from the card memory of one of the plurality of card. (Base claim 29).

Claims 35-40 and 42 are patentable as each recites a method comprising generating first signals corresponding to product pricing and generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase; reading third signals corresponding to product pricing from the card memory of one of the portable cards; executing a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals, wherein the method also includes executing a second program in a second memory, to determine a discount quantity by correlating second signals generated in a respective one of the cash register stations, with the third signals read in the respective one of the cash register stations. (Base claim 35).

Claims 43-46 are patentable as each recites a method comprising generating first signals corresponding to product pricing; generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase; generating third signals by reading from the card memory of one of the portable cards; executing a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals, sending a device signal on a signal path between a peripheral device and the first program, executing, responsive to the device signal, a second program in a second memory, to determine a discount quantity by correlating second signals with third signals, wherein the step of executing a first program determines a total amount due. (Base claim 43).

The Examiner stated, "Claims 19 and 29 are the most complex/sophisticated claims; they covers all limitations of independent claims (35 and 43) although claims' language are different: Claims 35 and 43 merely claim methods of use of the claimed systems). Therefore, the rationale for rejection of claims 19 and 29 are also applied for all other method of use claims." (Office Action, part 4). Applicants respectfully submit, however, that this statement by the Examiner is gratuitous and without stated foundation. Claim construction must begin with the language of the claim itself.

Applicants do, however, respectfully remind the Examiner that Applicants' claimed invention is directed to a non-obvious interrelation, or combination, of features, not merely the respective features that the Examiner seems to be considering in isolation.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims, as amended, are patentable and that the Application is otherwise in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully requests the reconsideration of the Application and the timely allowance of these claims.

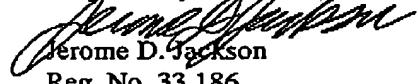
Incidentally, Applicants note that the issue of whether the claims of the instant Application are patentable over a reference is different than the issue of whether the claims of the reference would read on an embodiment of the invention of the instant Application.

If there are any other fees required for entry of this amendment, or for any other reason, please charge such fees to the undersigned attorney's Deposit Account No. 10-0077.

If the Examiner has any questions about this amendment, applicant's representative would appreciate discussing this amendment with the Examiner. Applicant's representative, Jerome Jackson, can be reached at 703-684-4840.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

Respectfully submitted,


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADEIN THE CLAIMS:

The claims have been amended as shown below, with text being added by the instant amendment shown underlined and text being deleted by the instant amendment enclosed in brackets ("[. . .]").

19. (Twice Amended) A system for operating with a plurality of portable cards each having a card memory, and a store having a plurality of products, the system comprising:
a plurality of cash register stations, each cash register station including
an electromagnetic detector for generating first signals corresponding to product pricing and for generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase;
a card interface for reading third signals corresponding to product pricing from the card memory of one of the portable cards;
a first processing unit that executes a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals,
wherein the system also includes a plurality of second processing units, each second processing unit executing a second program in a second memory, to determine a discount quantity by correlating [correlate] second signals from the electromagnetic detector, in a respective one of the

cash register stations, with the third signals read by the card interface, in the respective one of the cash register stations.

29. (Twice Amended) A system for operating with a plurality of portable cards each having a card memory for storing product discount information, and a store with a plurality of products, the system comprising:

a plurality of cash register stations, each cash register station including

an electromagnetic detector for generating first signals corresponding to product pricing and for generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase;

a card interface for reading from the card memory of one of the portable cards;

a first processing unit that executes a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals,

a signal path between a peripheral device and the first processing unit, a second processing unit, responsive to a signal on the signal path, that executes a second program in a second memory, to determine a discount quantity by correlating [correlate] second signals with third signals from the card memory of one of the plurality of card,

wherein the first processing unit determines a total amount due by receiving a fourth signal from the second processing unit.

35. (Twice Amended) A method for a system including a plurality of portable cards each having a card memory, and a store having a plurality of products, and a plurality of cash register stations, the method comprising:

generating first signals corresponding to product pricing and generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase;

reading third signals corresponding to product pricing from the card memory of one of the portable cards;

executing a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals, wherein the method also includes executing a second program in a second memory, to determine a discount quantity by correlating [correlate] second signals generated in a respective one of the cash register stations, with the third signals read in the respective one of the cash register stations.

43. (Three Times Amended) A method for a system including a plurality of portable cards each having a card memory for storing product discount information, and a store with a plurality of products, the method comprising:

generating first signals corresponding to product pricing;

generating second signals identifying products selected for purchase;

generating third signals by reading from the card memory of one of the portable cards;

executing a first program in a first memory to correlate second signals with first signals, sending a device signal on a signal path between a peripheral device and the first program,

executing, responsive to the device signal, a second program in a second memory, to determine a discount quantity by correlating [correlate] second signals with third signals, wherein the step of executing a first program determines a total amount due by receiving a fourth signal from the step of executing a second program.